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CITY OF HOPE MEDICAL CENTER
DUARTE, CALIFORNIA

DEPARTMENT OF PATHOLOGY

February 12, 1965

Dr J. Lederberg
Department of Genetics
Stanford School of Medicine
Palo Alto, California.

Dear Doctor Lederberg:

Your talk to the Genetics Club Meeting at Carmel provoked thoughtful reaction needed and welcome among those involved in contemporary medical-biological sciences. There is no need to amplify the commentary on the place of genetics in medical school teaching. Although many schools lack the comprehensive approach as you described takes place at Stanford, the pressure of scientific events will eventually prevail.


It is to your second topic that some special address may be taken. Whether or not the future of man will or can be usefully modified by "genetic banks" or "vegetative reproduction", the public needs to become aware of biology's potential in this respect. In view of current attempts at control of population, the concern for maintaining peace and the close approximation of formerly isolated and segregated societies one may correctly assess the situation as critical.

Because of the crucial situation at the close of World War II, scientists, some of whom had been involved with the creation of the A-bomb, formed the Federation of American Scientists. This organization acted to disseminate information among scientists about Federal actions bearing on their concern - the uses of atomic power. It also provided an informal liaison between scientists and legislators which was vigorous and productive. The Bulletin of Atomic Scientist was also begun. This open forum linked the public with scientific thought on the problems of arms control, fallout, etc.

There cannot be an overestimate on the benefit of the FAS and BAS, whose activities you know better than I. This reminder is in response to your question of what to do about educating the public. The scientific community needs to be informed of governmental intent in fields of population control, etc. And, there desperately needs to be an open forum to which the layman can turn for reliable information and the existing range of expert opinion on topics which may affect his future and his immediate political decisions. A similar magazine might be started.

No doubt you have ideas of more effective action in this direction. Hopefully they will not lie dormant even until the next club meeting. The unique combination of knowledge and teaching ability which you possess, makes it logical that you effect a beginning. After all, you started the discussion!

Sincerely


R. K. Teplitz, M.D.
Cytogenetics Division

RLT/ed